

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

105th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 115

June 25, 1997, 9:43 am
Page S-6292 Temp. Record

BALANCED BUDGET ACT/Strike Several Medicare Reforms

SUBJECT: **Balanced Budget Act of 1997 . . . S. 947. Reed motion to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the Reed amendment No. 445.**

ACTION: MOTION REJECTED, 25-75

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 947, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, will make net mandatory spending reductions to achieve the savings necessary to balance the budget by 2002 and to provide the American people with tax relief. This bill is the first reconciliation bill that is required by H.Con. Res. 84, the Budget Resolution for fiscal year (FY) 1998 (see vote No. 92). The second bill will provide tax relief (see vote No. 160).

The Reed amendment would strike several of the Medicare provisions, including the following reforms:

- the medical savings account demonstration program (for related debate, see 104th Congress, second session, vote No. 72);
- the gradual increase in the Medicare eligibility age to 67 (for related debate, see vote No. 112);
- the requirement that beneficiaries pay \$5 for home health care visits (for related debate, see vote No. 111); and
- the provision that will allow Medicare beneficiaries to purchase private health care coverage that has costs for some services that are higher than the rates that Medicare pays (the beneficiaries will pay the additional costs) but that also offers services not covered by Medicare, such as eyeglasses (current law makes such so-called balance billing illegal; for related debate, see 104th Congress, 1st session, vote No. 527, and 104th Congress, 2nd session, vote No. 130).

Senator Domenici raised the point of order that the Reed amendment violated the Budget Act. Senator Reed then moved to waive the Budget Act for the consideration of the amendment. Debate on a debatable motion to a reconciliation bill is limited to 1 hour. Debate was further limited by unanimous consent. Generally, those favoring the motion to waive favored the amendment; those opposing the motion to waive opposed the amendment.

NOTE: A three-fifths majority (60) vote is required to waive the Budget Act.

(See other side)

YEAS (25)		NAYS (75)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (25 or 56%)	Republicans (55 or 100%)	Democrats (20 or 44%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
	Akaka	Abraham	Hutchinson	Baucus	
	Biden	Allard	Hutchison	Bingaman	
	Boxer	Ashcroft	Inhofe	Breaux	
	Byrd	Bennett	Jeffords	Bryan	
	Cleland	Bond	Kempthorne	Bumpers	
	Daschle	Brownback	Kyl	Conrad	
	Dorgan	Burns	Lott	Dodd	
	Durbin	Campbell	Lugar	Feinstein	
	Feingold	Chafee	Mack	Glenn	
	Ford	Coats	McCain	Graham	
	Harkin	Cochran	McConnell	Kerry	
	Hollings	Collins	Murkowski	Kerry	
	Inouye	Coverdell	Nickles	Kohl	
	Johnson	Craig	Roberts	Landrieu	
	Kennedy	D'Amato	Roth	Lieberman	
	Lautenberg	DeWine	Santorum	Moseley-Braun	
	Leahy	Domenici	Sessions	Moynihan	
	Levin	Enzi	Shelby	Robb	
	Mikulski	Faircloth	Smith, Bob	Torricelli	
	Murray	Frist	Smith, Gordon	Wyden	
	Reed	Gorton	Snowe		
	Reid	Gramm	Specter		
	Rockefeller	Grams	Stevens		
	Sarbanes	Grassley	Thomas		
	Wellstone	Gregg	Thompson		
		Hagel	Thurmond		
		Hatch	Warner		
		Helms			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Those favoring the motion to waive contended:

We can and must stabilize the Medicare system, but we must do so thoughtfully and with all due deliberation. The Reed amendment would accomplish this end. It would keep most of the Finance Committee proposals, thereby retaining the savings of roughly \$115 billion, but it would strike the most objectionable proposals. A few of those objectionable proposals (the \$5 copayment, the means testing, and the eligibility age) have already been voted upon. The amendment would also strike the proposals on medical savings accounts (MSAs) and on balance billing. The MSA provisions should be stricken because only healthy, wealthy individuals will get MSAs, and Medicare will be weaker without those individuals' participation. The balance billing provisions will be stricken because if they are retained unscrupulous people will trick elderly people into paying too much for medical services. The Reed amendment would improve on the Medicare provisions in this bill. The Budget Act should be waived for its consideration.

Those opposing the motion to waive contended:

A few moments ago this 600-page amendment was offered. We have not had time to examine it, nor do we have any Congressional Budget Office estimate on its deficit impact. We have only the description of its contents from its sponsor. Based on that description, we firmly oppose this amendment. It contains at least three provisions that large majorities of Senators have already rejected; we cannot begin to fathom why anyone would expect Senators to support objectionable measures that were rejected singly once they have been lumped together in one offensive mass. Making the amendment even less supportable, it would strike the MSA demonstration project and the balance billing provisions, both of which have wide support in the Senate. A point of order lies against this amendment, and given that its provisions are strongly opposed by most Senators, we are certain that the motion to waive the Budget Act for its consideration will be rejected.